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Stimson - The Marietta Reading Club, 1864-1894

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Marietta

Reading Club.

1864-1894.

THE

MARIETTA READING CLUB

1864--1894

BY

R. M. STIMSON

PRINTED AT THE REGISTER OFFICE
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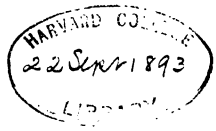

H. P. Blavatsky

THE MARIETTA READING CLUB.

Tuesday evening, Oct. 4, 1864, several ladies and gentlemen met at the residence of Miss Maria M. Woodbridge, Putnam street, when was adopted a constitution, forming "The Marietta and Harmar Reading Club." The first record is in a substantial and handsome book—now somewhat worn—wherein are accounts of the proceedings for nineteen years. The use of the second book began Oct. 2, 1883, a book of like style and size as the first, and still in service. This constitution, it may be remarked, was, with a few changes, that of "The Kaleidoscope," a reading club in Marietta, which had previously existed and expired.

The suggester and chief promoter of the present Club, which has had a remarkable success for thirty years, was Mr. Charles H. Goddard, who was one of its most active and enthusiastic members for more than a decade. During this time, the Club had no more able and incisive debater than was Mr. Goddard. Of fine taste in general literature and well up in the thought of the age, of discriminating faculties and of a nervous-sanguine temperament, he was an antagonist that could have held sway in a far wider field.

The record gives the names of thirty persons as Founders of the Club, and adopting a Constitution, which has been amended from time to time, as needs

seemed to demand, maintaining the original purpose of reading and discussion and social entertainment.

ORIGINAL MEMBERSHIP.

The original thirty members are here named, mostly given with initials in the record, but now written more fully, to distinguish the individuals:

*Prof. Evan W. Evans, died, 1874.
Mrs. Helen C. Evans.
*President I. W. Andrews, D. D., LL. D., died 1888.
Mrs. Marianne S. Andrews.
*Prof. George R. Rosseter, LL. D., died 1882.
*Prof. John Kendrick, LL. D., died 1889.
Mrs. George M. Woodbridge.
†Miss Maria M. Woodbridge.
Dr. H. B. Shipman.
*Mrs. Ellen L. Nye, died 1886.
Rev. John Boyd, D. D.
Charles H. Goddard.
Miss Nancy J. Porterfield.
Miss Kate J. Kendrick.
Miss Sarah R. Emerson.
*Rev. Erastus Adkins, D. D., died 1890.
Miss Lucy Benedict.
*Benj. P. Putnam.
Mrs. Lydia E. Putnam.
*Chas. B. Wells, died 1885.
*Mrs. Cornelia A. Wells, died 1889.
Mrs. Col. Craig.
Mrs. Sarah N. Lovell.
†Judge Martin D. Follett.

*Deceased. †Present Members.

*Wm. H. Buell, died 1891.
*Prof. E. B. Andrews, LL. D., died 1880.
Chas. T. Butler.
†Mrs. Frances G. Slack.
*Rev. Thomas Wickes, died 1870.
Rev. Wm. A. Bosworth.

Of these thirty, two were announced at the second meeting as withdrawn, Miss Benedict and Rev. Dr. Wickes; and at the third meeting, two others, Prof. Evans and Wm. H. Buell. Dr. Shipman and Mr. Butler had retired by Jan. 10th, at the seventh meeting. Six more, Mrs. Ellen L. Nye, Miss Kendrick, Prof. Adkins, Mrs. Lovell, Prof. E. B. Andrews, and W. A. Bosworth, had left the Club by the beginning of the second year, as also one of five elected as members in the first season, Mrs. Adkins. This left the Club to begin its second year with only twenty-two members, thirteen of the first thirty-five withdrawn. Rev. Dr. Wickes, Prof. E. B. Andrews and Prof. Evans subsequently re-entered the Club, and Mr. Buell, years after, again became a member. Of these thirteen, Mr. Bosworth removed from town, the other twelve were resignations. It is not to be understood that there was any dissatisfaction, but simply that the Club was in its infancy and had not grown into the reputation and strength that it soon came to enjoy and has ever since held. There have been but eight resignations for more than twenty years, if we except two ladies who are still constant attendants with their husbands. The other vacancies have occurred by death or removal from Marietta.

Of the original members, sixteen were gentlemen,

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*Deceased. †Present Members.

fourteen ladies. Twelve of the thirty are not now living, ten are yet residents of the city, and eight elsewhere. Three, after nearly a generation, are still members of the Club, Mrs. Slack, Miss Maria M. Woodbridge, and Judge M. D. Follett.

MEMBERS ELECTED WITH DATE OF ELECTION.

Rev. I. N. Carman,	Nov. 29, 1864.	
*Mrs. Prof. Adkins,	Jan. 10, 1865.	deceased.
Mrs. E. R. Cadwallader,	" " "	
Rev. Fred May Holland,	" " "	
*Mrs. Nahum Ward,	" 24, "	d. 1872.
†Dr. J. D. Cotton,	Oct. 3, 1865.	
Mrs. Dr. Cotton,	" " "	
Mrs. Fred May Holland,	" " "	
*Mrs. M. D. Follett,	" " "	d. 1873.
†Prof. John L. Mills,	Oct. 17, 1865.	
†Mrs. J. L. Mills,	" " "	
Mrs. Titus,	" " "	
Prof. John L. Lyle, Ph. D.,	" " "	
*Judge Chas. R. Rhodes,	Jan. 9, 1866.	
†Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Rhodes,	" " "	
*Wylie H. Oldham,	" 23, "	
Wm. B. Thomas,	" " "	
Mrs. Mary J. Thomas,	Oct. 2, "	
Rev. Henry W. Ballantine,	" 30, "	
Mrs. Ballantine,	" " "	
†Douglas Putnam,	" " "	
Gen. T. C. H. Smith,	" " "	
*Hon. Rufus E. Harte,	Nov. 27, 1886.	d. 1891.
†Mrs. Douglas Putnam,	Feb. 17, 1867.	

*Deceased. †Present Members.

†Hon. Rodney M. Stimson,	Oct. 1, 1867.	
Mrs. Julia I. Stimson,	" " "	
Col. S. H. Stafford,	" " "	
*Mrs. Stafford,	" " "	d. 1868.
Miss Ellen C. Merriam,	" 30 "	
Rev. W. C. Finney,	Nov. 12, "	
*Mrs. Finney,	" " "	deceased.
†Judge Hiram L. Sibley,	" " "	
Judge Wm. B. Loomis,	Oct. 6, 1868.	
†Beman Gates,	" 20, "	
Mrs. Betsey Gates,	" " "	
†Gen. A. J. Warner,	" 5, 1869.	
*Prof. David E. Beach, D. D.,	" 19, "	d. 1888.
Rev. Theron H. Hawks, D. D.,	" " "	
Mrs. Hawks,	" " "	
*Rev. Wm. Wakefield,	" " "	
*Rev. Wm. Addy, D. D.,	Nov. 2, "	d. 1891.
Rev. J. Riley Johnson,	" " "	
†Judge Samuel S. Knowles,	Jan. 11, 1870.	
*Rev. Marsena Stone, D. D.,	Nov. 1, "	d. 1893.
Prof. Wm. B. Graves,	" " "	
*Hon. Wm. P. Cutler,	Oct. 17, 1871,	d. 1889.
Gen. Rufus R. Dawes,	" " "	
Joseph Addison Kingsbury,	" " "	
*James McArthur,	" " "	d. 1892.
Rev. Josiah H. Jenkins,	" 21, 1873.	
Prof. S. S. Orris, Ph.D., L.H.D.,	" " "	
Francis W. Minshall,	Feb. 24, 1874.	
†Prof. Thos. D. Biscoe, LL. D.,	Oct. 20, "	
Prof. E. A. Jones,	" " "	
†Miss Elizabeth Anderson,	Nov. 17, "	

*Deceased. †Present Members.

†Rev. George R. Gear, D. D.,	" 30, 1875.	
Frank F. Oldham,	" " "	
†Col. Reuben L. Nye,	Nov. 28, 1876.	
Maj. Jewett Palmer,	" " "	
Prof. I.J.Manatt, Ph.D.,LL.D.,	Oct. 16, 1877.	
†Prof. Martin R. Andrews,	Feb. 24, 1880.	
†Theodore D. Dale,	" " "	
Eli R. Alderman,	Oct. 17, 1882.	
Rev. Henry C. Haskell, D.D.,	" 31, "	
†Prof. Joseph H. Chamberlin,	" 16, 1883.	
†Rev. C. E Dickinson, D.D.,	" " "	
Rev. James T. Lusk,	Feb. 5, 1884.	
*Prof. O. H. Mitchell, Ph. D.,	" " "	d. 1889.
Alfred Dewey Follett,	Dec. 2, 1884.	
†Prof. Edw. E. Phillips, Ph. D.,	Oct. 27, 1885.	
†Chas. H. Turner,	" " "	
Daniel Perkins Bosworth,	" " "	
Gen. John Eaton, Ph.D.,LL.D.,	Jan. 26, 1886.	
Prof. Chas. K. Wells,	Feb. 23, "	
†Miss Maria P. Woodbridge,	Oct. 19, "	
†Hon. William G. Way,	Jan. 18, 1887.	
†Wm. W. Mills,	Nov. 13, "	
Dr. Z. D. Walter,	Feb. 28, 1888.	
†Prof.N.J.Morrison,D.D.,LL.D.	Nov. 6, "	
Rev. F. S. Harris,	" " "	
Prof. Henry W. Hulbert,	Oct. 27, 1889.	
David Okey,	" " "	
†John E. Vandervoort,	" " "	
†Miss Sarah Cutler,	Jan. 27, 1891.	
Rev. R. F. Bishop,	" " "	
Rev. G. Heber Rice,	Nov. 17, 1891.	

*Deceased. †Present Members.

†Prof. Thos. E. McKinney,	Nov. 17, 1891.
†Dr. Harry N. Curtis,	" " "
†Wm. C. Gurley,	" " "
†Pres.J.W.Simpson,D.D.,LL.D.	Oct. 18, 1892.
†Prof. Henry B. Miter,	" " "
†Rev. Wm. E. Roe,	" " "
†Rev. Geo. Brayton Penney,	Oct. 17, 1893.
†Rev. Silas L. Smith,	" " "
†Hon. Frederick J. Cutter,	March 6, 1894.
†Frederick S. Turner,	" " "

Total number of members, 126. Ladies, 35, gentlemen, 91. Deceased, 27, still living, 99. Residents in Marietta at the present time, 68, elsewhere, 41. There have never been but twelve deaths of active members, eight of them within the past ten years.

It is worthy of remark that thirty-eight have been connected with Marietta College, as Instructors or Trustees, eleven others graduates of the College, and thirteen graduates of other colleges, making two-thirds of the whole number of the gentlemen of the Club, college educated men, and of the thirty-five ladies, sixteen the wives of college men.

It is also worthy of note, that of the one hundred and twenty-six members, eighty-five are recorded in the first ten years, leaving only forty-one who have been elected within the last twenty years, or about two a year to come into the membership in the last two-thirds of the Club's existence. There was but one member elected in 1877, none in 1878, 1879, 1881, and none in 1890. Yet the Club has been substantially kept to its full number of forty. "Few die and none resign," has been pretty nearly as true in respect to the Marietta Reading Club,

*Deceased. †Present Members.

as it has been supposed to be with the office-holders of the Federal Government. More than one-third of the present members, have been in the Club a quarter of a century. In a word, it has been *permanence.*

In this connection, it may be stated that at the first meeting in the second year, the number of members was increased by amendment to the constitution from thirty to thirty-six, and in the third year the number was fixed at forty, as at present.

The only one ever elected as a member of this Club, who declined to accept the honor, was, in 1883, Mr. M. P. Wells, our fellow-citizen, just deceased.

Nov. 16, 1869, the constitution was amended to read: "Those of the members' wives, who are not themselves members, shall have the privilege of attending all meetings of the Club, without invitation." This makes the wife of every member, a member in her own right, except that she is not called upon to vote or to read, but she is expected to take part in the discussions, as indeed are all invited guests, by rule, if they may so desire. Under this amendment to the constitution, there are at present twenty-nine "wives," members of the Club in every practical sense, counting with a full club of forty, sixty-nine who may attend without invitation. On the average, scarcely forty of this number are present at any one Club, absences accounted for by absence from town, physical indisposition, or other duties of whatsoever kind. It is not expected that any member will bring a friend unless that friend shall not be a resident of the town, and then only on notice to the hostess.

OFFICERS WITH DATE OF ELECTION.

Presidents—	I. W. Andrews,	Oct. 4, 1864.
	John Boyd,	" 6, 1868.
	Douglas Putnam,	" 7, 1869.
	George R. Gear,	" 7, 1890.
	R. M. Stimson,	" 4, 1892.
Vice Presidents—	John Boyd,	Nov. 15, 1864.
	Douglas Putnam,	Oct. 6, 1868.
	Rufus E. Harte,	" 19, 1869.
	George R. Gear,	" 6, 1885.
	N. J. Morrison,	" 7, 1890.
	R. M. Stimson,	Nov. 17, 1891.
	M. R. Andrews,	Oct. 4, 1892.
Secretaries—	George R. Rosseter,	" 4, 1864.
	John L. Mills,	" 5, 1869.
	J. A. Kingsbury,	" 3, 1877.
	T. D. Dale,	Feb. 7, 1882.
	C. K. Wells,	Oct. 4, 1887.
	Chas. H. Turner,	" 7, 1890.

It will be noted that changes of officers have not been frequent. Mr. Putnam was President twenty-one years; Mr. Harte, Vice President sixteen years; and the Secretaries have served an average of five years each. The present Secretary has been in office four years, and has a long term yet to hold the honor. It is observed that some of the ladies have been more *enthusiastic* to entertain the Club, under Mr. Turner's secretaryship than in some former years.

There was at first a Critic elected, and a Vice-Critic. Prof. John Kendrick served as Critic for about ten years, that is, he had the first say on an article read, till the present arrangement, wherein a Critic is made for a

special article or the evening. The Vice-Critics were Rev. I. N. Carman, Prof. E. B. Andrews, till Oct. 6, 1869, Gen. T. C. H. Smith was elected the Vice-Critic to serve when Prof. Kendrick should be absent, a thing that probably never occurred.

There was in the beginning a Budget Reader, to read what was called "The Budget." The design was for some light selected or original articles, poetry, jokes, anything entertaining or giving points of information. Among the Budget Readers were Mrs. Andrews, Miss Kate Kendrick, Mrs. Lovell, Mrs. Slack, and perhaps other ladies In 1867, Benj. P. Putnam was made permanent Budget Reader. There was often no Budget, and finally it grew into disuse. Years afterward, it was revived and R. M. Stimson made Budget Reader, but he had to furnish all the matter himself, and there was really no time for it, after an animated and probably prolonged discussion. So the Budget went into an "unknown grave," with no mourners, no tombstone, no epitaph, nor was it "buried alive."

THE COMMITTEE.

Dec. 29, 1874, a resolution was adopted, "That Prof. Beach, Prof. Rosseter and Gen. Warner are hereby appointed a Committee—First for the purpose of exercising the exclusive right of presenting to the Club candidates for membership." The other provisions were to see that suitable articles or subjects were secured for reading and discussion, the announcement of this at each meeting for the next, and to appoint and inform a Critic, without unnecessary delay.

This has never been abrogated, and doubtless never ought to be set aside. This Committee, known as the

Executive Committe, continued without change for five years, when all declined to serve longer. Prof. Biscoe, Col. Nye and Judge Follett were then elected, in 1879. Since 1881, the Committee has been Judge Sibley, six years, R. M. Stimson, seven years, Prof. Mitchell, five years, till his death, in 1889; then F. F. Oldham, W. W. Mills, Prof. Phillips, Prof. Chamberlain, Wm. G. Way, and last year Col. Nye again, in place of Prof. Phillips, absent in Europe. It is recollected that one member of the Committee, resigned in terrific disgust, and had hard work to get his resignation accepted.

In practice, the readers generally select their own articles or subjects, as well as select the Critic—*always*, if the reader is a lady, ever more punctual than the average man. But it is a very delicate duty imposed on the Committee to present candidates for membership. All are privileged to suggest to the Committee, which is supposed to be not biased against any person whatever, and its action is meant to reflect the sentiment of the Club, ascertained, it may be, by unerring intuition. The reports of the Committee have rarely been called in question. This method is undoubtedly productive of good results, however unpleasant to the individuals of the Committee, as it is here feelingly known often to be, from seven years of unprejudiced and careful experience. It prevents open conflicts in the Club, and whatever there may be of the non-agreeable, is religiously held by the Committee, in absolute privacy.

SOME DESULTORY NOTES.

Among the By-Laws, adopted in 1864, it seems now a little amusing to read: "The hostess of the evening shall not invite so many guests as to incommode the

members of the Club." Again, it was made the rule that the hostess should have "the privilege of inviting five guests"—five outsiders only to be admitted to view the charming parlors and enjoy the elaborate "spread" of the lady of the house! This rule did not absolutely die "a-bornin'," but lasted till the first lady chose to violate it, in her own right—a right very speedily exercised with no one to complain. For many years, the number of persons present at the Club, has seldom fallen below forty, with often fifty or sixty. Last winter, the number was once seventy-five, and generally more than sixty, yet the members did not feel "incommoded," so admirably were the arrangements made by "the hostess of the evening."

The smallest number ever present, was at Mrs. F. F. Oldham's, on Fourth street, central in the town, opposite the college grounds, January 8, 1884. It was an evening of extraordinary inclemency, with the snow about two feet deep, the record says twenty-two inches. Yet those present were in the highest of spirits, everything went off nicely, reading, discussion, and all. It was declared a charming time. Sleighs beat the paths to take the ladies to their homes. Some of the men had laboriously to wade.

We come to "the delights of the table"—usually in the Club, while not nectar and ambrosia, yet a feast "fit for the Gods." It was once recognized by some of the "liege lords" that it was somewhat of a burden and no small expense, for a lady to entertain the Club. So a rule was adopted that the feast should not be "fit for the gods," as is here supposed, and that the "diet" should be, well not exactly like that of the hardened criminal in the dungeon, "bread and water," but very simple, such as

would allay the nerves of the debaters, a "frugal meal," and harmless, quite economical and rational for literary beings—"high living" all out of character! This commandment was strictly obeyed until the first lady should entertain the club! Who should dictate to her where she was supreme? And no one was ever known to impeach that lady's saving common sense, even if the Club, in its collective wisdom, did assume to prescribe rules for her to break forthwith and everlastingly. It has been for the most part, for at least a quarter of a century, an Oyster Supper, with accompaniments to match, including coffee, the delicious Java, beautifully amber-colored with cream that was no counterfeit.

It must be noted that the custom of elaborate entertainments and large numbers of invited guests, gave rise to the practice, except in the case of single ladies, to elect only gentlemen, both to widen the scope of the Club, and by including more households, to render less frequent the necessity for any one lady to give the entertainment.

At first, the supper was after the reading and before the discussion. Then it was put after the literary exercises, next before, last again, till finally the lady of the house has been graciously permitted to do as she pleases in this matter. Last winter all but one announced "supper at 6 o'clock, standard time."

Here let it be said, and said with emphasis, that the strength of the Marietta Reading Club, is in the combination of the literary and the polemic with the reasonable bounties of the table. It is the intellectual and the social qualities, blended, that have given and will give the Club its continuing life—forever, for all that now can be seen.

MORE RANDOM NOTES.

The Club meets on the evening of the first Tuesday in October, and ordinarily thereafter once in two weeks, till the last of March or first of April. This would give thirteen or fourteen meetings for the winter season. But public occasions, or some good reason, lessen the number. It has been fourteen, in five several seasons, thirteen a few times, and never below nine, and that only twice. The average number has been eleven. The Club has met 350 times, in all. Of course, those who have been members for the longest period have entertained the Club the most times—Mrs. Slack counting 17; Mrs. Wells, deceased, 14; Miss Maria M. Woodbridge and Mrs. Warner each 13; Mrs. Cotton, Mrs. Douglas Putnam, and Mrs. J. L. Mills each 12; Mrs. Stimson, 11; and Mrs. Knowles, 10; these nine entertaining the Club 114 times, nearly one-third of the whole. All of these ladies came into the Club, twenty-five or more years ago. It should ever be remembered that it is not uncommon for it to be extremely inconvenient, and at times practically impossible, for some ladies to entertain the Club. It is best to be very charitable in this regard, for the outside world cannot always see what is inside. The title of one of Charles Reade's novels is always in order—"Put Yourself in His Place."

It is to be regretted that the ladies do not more often take some part in the remarks after the reading. The late Mrs. Wells did say something of interest on several occasions. It does not appear in the records that any other ladies ever "spoke out" except Mrs. Douglas Putnam, Mrs. Hawks, Mrs. Slack, Miss Maria M. Woodbridge and Mrs. Betty Mills. Perhaps others may have said a

word or two. As before stated, any lady of the Club has the legal right to speak her mind. It is not a matter of courtesy at all.

Occasions are not frequent when invited guests have spoken, although allowed to do so by the rules. Dec. 28, 1880, at Gen. Warner's, President Hinsdale, of Hiram College, Prof. Smith, of Oberlin, and Prof. Hicks, of Denison University, all took part in the discussion. Oct. 7, 1884, at the house of Mr. Gates, Hon. Thomas B. Reed, of Maine, made some extended remarks, when the subject was "The Distribution of Wealth." Oct. 19, 1886, at Mrs. Turner's, Gov. Foraker, and Gen. C. H. Grosvenor, visited the Club, for a short time, and made a few cordial remarks befitting the welcome.

The discussions in the Club have sometimes, particularly about 1869 to 1875, been not to say animated, but quite heated. Feb. 14, 1871, it is recorded that there were some "impolite interruptions." Usually, though, the temper has been admirable, however vigorous the attack and defense. It is not too much to say, that in the history of the Club, many of the discussions have been strong, by strong men.

Feb. 10, 1874, at Mrs. Slack's, when the discussion was persistent, the alarm of the burning of the Marietta Chair Factory was sounded—which the record says "somewhat interfered with the supreme enjoyment of the refreshments that followed."

HUMORS OF THE CLUB.

Among the humors of the Club, may be mentioned that there have been times when the reading, a full hour allowed, was somewhat tedious, and some people would express discomfort. Once after a series of this kind of

discomforts, when yawns and sleep profound on part of some parties, had been especially numerous, and the general sentiment had been expressed that the reading should be shortened, Mr. Stimson offered an amendment to limit the reading to three-quarters of an hour, cutting the time down fifteen minutes. On vote, the amendment was "overwhelmingly defeated," and the mover cast into disastrous ignominy. As is recollected, his own was about all the affirmative there was. Well, he had the satisfaction that it was an "unthinking mob" that beat him. However, it is commendable that for years the Club has stood by the "Constitution as it is"—very conservative ladies and gentlemen. In common affairs of society or government, whoever proposes a change, should prove that the change is for the better, or the change ought not to be made.

On one occasion, when woman's suffrage was the subject, a ballot was taken in the Club on, "Should women have the right to vote on political questions?" Amid no little amusement, the ladies voted, Aye 8, No 14. The gentlemen voted, all Aye, except one, and it was suggested that this one was hen-pecked. Of course, this was a "straw vote," and signified nothing. Upon a real vote in active life, it may be doubted if a single one of those men would, at that day, have voted in the affirmative; and very few women in the Club, or out of it, aside from educational or temperance questions, would care to be privileged to exercise the right of suffrage.

It may be added that the records do not usually reflect the spirit of the Club, the sharp thrusts, the keen encounters, the dry wit, the odd and characteristic remarks, the half-audible expressions of ladies, the suppressed anger, the smiles of approval or disgust, the fun, the light

by-play, and the severity. For all this, "you should have been there."

ORIGINAL ESSAYS AND WRITTEN PAPERS.

These have not been frequent, but always welcomed when they come. Feb. 14, 1871, the subject presented by the readers, Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Wells, was the Inspiration of the Scriptures. The minutes say that "the discussion which followed was able and interesting, characterized by deep but good feeling. Many desired to participate who were prevented by want of time." Oct. 3d following, the reading was by Rev. J. R. Johnson, on "The Bondage of the Pulpit," and by Rev. Dr. Hawks, extracts from an address by Rev. Dr. Mark Hopkins, on "Modern Skepticism in its relation to Young Men." The minutes say: "The Critic [who?] was able and slashing and the following discussion exciting." Oct. 31st, by vote of the Club, Chas. H. Goddard was requested, four weeks thereafter, to present his views on various topics heretofore discussed by the Club, and he was allowed as much time as he should desire. Dec. 12th, (1871,) Mr. Goddard read an original article devoted largely to a criticism of the views of Dr. Hopkins on the Trust, Faith, and the Honesty of Skeptics. The minutes [Prof. Mills was the Secretary] say: "Mr. G. read for nearly two hours" and "dwelt with great ability and length upon the commonly received view of the inspiration of the Scriptures." A motion by Dr. Andrews that the Club do not discuss it, but resume its ordinary readings, was carried. Dec. 26th, on motion of Mr. Goddard, the last meeting for the season, was "set apart, entire, for the discussion of the inspiration of the Scriptures, its nature and extent." March 19, 1872, by previous request of the

Club, Rev. Dr. Stone and Prof. Beach read original essays on the Inspiration of the Scriptures, occupying two hours. As before decided, there was no discussion. But by vote of the Club all restrictions of time to be occupied by the several speakers for the discussion of April 2d, were removed. The appointed time came at Gen. Warner's house, and the minutes are brief, Inspiration of the Scriptures the subject. The Critic [who?] claimed the right to open the discussion. It is recorded only that the Critic "was followed by Gen. Warner and others, who freely, but in a gentlemanly tone, gave expression to their views upon the august subject."

The writer was not present at any of these readings and discussions, then having duties in Columbus, but from what he casually heard on temporary visits here, it may be said it was a season of very deep feeling in the Club, largely held in private repression, and from what he knows of the culture and power of the writers of the essays, Mr. Goddard, Rev. Dr. Stone and Prof. Beach, and of the ability of those who took part in the discussions, he is ready to believe that it was the most remarkable discussion ever had in Southeastern Ohio. It is probably not amiss to say, had those essays and discussions been at this day, in some of our large cities, the participants would have attracted the nation's attention, and some of the men achieved a national reputation. It was, however, only in the private parlors of Marietta households, and in the social Marietta Reading Club.

So much space has been given to the foregoing, that it must be briefly stated that Prof. Beach read several very notable critiques, and that upon chance occasions others have read papers deserving high commendation. R. E. Harte once read a well considered paper for the free

coinage of silver; and in 1889, Rev. Dr. Morrison, an extended paper on "The Future of Marietta College," which was printed in pamphlet form. Gen. Warner, in early 1894, read a paper on the coinage of silver, and matters related thereto, of considerable length, and of unquestioned force on the side of free coinage. Feb. 20, 1894, Rev. Dr. Dickinson read an original and highly interesting paper on "Literature and Marietta as a Literary Centre." April 3, 1883, at Dr. Cotton's, Mr. Stimson, by the favor of the club, gave a conversational hour to the description of public men and things he had seen; and again, Oct. 17, 1893, at Prof. Hulbert's, he gave another rambling talk on distinguished men and women, who had come under his personal observation—both of these occasions out of the usual line of exercises in the Club. These two informal efforts were substantially different, one from the other.

LITERARY AND INTELLECTUAL FORCES.

It has been sometimes remarked, not often, that the literary exercises of the Club ought to be of a higher order. This by no means implies that they are or have been of a low order, for that would not be true. But it is, that the exercises should be given a more elaborate and formal character.

Well, there is no rule against any gentleman, or lady either, preparing an essay or a critique that shall fill all the requirements of a polished, learned and able production. The Club at any time will be swift to accept the favor.

Again, there has ever been great care in the selection of articles and papers from magazines and reviews, from newspapers, and chapters and extracts from notable

books, indeed from any and every source, for reading in the Club. This work cannot be done in any more faithful and highly creditable manner. During a period of thirty years, in which the Club has met three hundred and fifty times, probably over five hundred articles have been read, embracing a wide range of subjects in poetry and general literature, in amusements, science, social and economic questions, law, morals, trade, theology, and what not. So it is now no small task to select a good theme, that may not be hackneyed in the Club.

But for the discussions, here is the point. If essays and critiques are to be required, such as for a public address, while in respect to the Club all of us want to be "counted in," yet under such straight-jacket formalities, as the fellow who got whipped in the general fight, tearfully said: "Count me out." In the exactions of active life, few members have time for elaborate and systematic preparation. The intellectual strength of the Club lies in the very fact that, after the reading of an able or interesting paper, a member, even the Critic himself, can sit in his chair, and in a free-and-easy manner, say what he likes, without the restraint of a public occasion. In this way, any one can fire off or fire in whatever he may think or believe, or what at the moment may occur to him, in relation to the subject under discussion. The exercises of the Club are not and never have been of an inferior nature. It is a libel to insinuate otherwise. It is the province of the Club to be social and informal, even in its literary and intellectual character. When it is written, as a rule, that it shall be essays or critiques of the high and the pains-taking, then the Club will be ready for its epitaph.

Again, it has been the impression of some, and per-

haps the writer of this paper may have given some countenance to it, that the Club, in its discussions, is not equal to former days. Very true, there were "giants in those days." But candidly, does not much of this impression, if it exists, arise from the enchantment of the past? We remember the strong and the fascinating, but forget the common-place, which certainly had its full share in the days that are gone. It is admitted that Prof. Kendrick has no successor, with his wide reading and almost marvelous memory, with his readiness at any time on any subject, to fill the Critic's chair, and do it creditably, sometimes not logically but ever entertainingly, now on one side of a question, then on the other, occasionly on both sides in the same evening. The exactness, the clearness, and always-to-the-point remarks of President Andrews and the great ability of Mr. Cutler may be conceded. But all the culture, the information, the power, the readiness, the clearness and the force of expression, did not die with them. All in all, it is not to be entertained for a moment that the Club, now-a-days, is one whit inferior to what it was at any former period, in substantial respects. In fact, it is not clear that it is not better, on the average, in all its combinations.

Certainly, there was a time of great ability and incisiveness, as when the Inspiration of the Scriptures, twenty odd years ago, was under discussion. Questions of belief and faith on this and cognate matters, have been measurably indirectly avoided, these later years. Men of thought are apt to have "views" on points of theology. Tread on a man's theological corns, and a fight to the finish is the quick result. Do thus now in the Club, and there would be a quickening and a warm-

up that might satisfy the most acute appetite for a sharp, learned, vigorous and able discussion. But would it pay? It is here believed not.

We are all young when we come to the Club. With years added to years in the Club's history, some of us have passed the "three score and ten," when personal comfort and good cheer, if obtainable, are about all there is left of life; and most of us have arrived at the time for thoughtful consideration and of well settled convictions. What is the use of rasping any one's feelings or of assailing the belief or faith of any one in all things which tend to a "better life," now or hereafter? The resulting bitterness may well be shunned. The question is not what "advanced thinkers" may be at, but what is best for society and the world at large. This cannot be in undermining the foundations of the Christian Church.

THE CHARACTER AND PERMANENCE OF THE CLUB.

Modestly with all due consideration: The like of this Club, in its combined literary and social character, and its unvarying success for so long a period, is not to be found elsewhere in the United States.

Let no one say this is not true. "Socials" and "Musicals" there are and have been without number, the "Sorosis," the "Dial," and Literary Societies and Clubs, evanescent usually, sometimes of more or less permanence. There is a Literary Club in Cincinnati, incorporated more than forty years ago, of which President Hayes was one of the founders, and one of our own members, Gen. T. C. H. Smith, subsequently was in that Club. But this is for gentlemen only. As above, so all, so everywhere. Our "Senior Club," as it is locally known, has its "Junior Club," and spasmodic Clubs similar to ours

may have had temporary existence in other quarters. But substantially, the Marietta Reading Club, in its character and combination make-up, in its long life and continued prosperity, has no sustained parallel, and is a *Nothing-Like-It.* It has been "eternal" for thirty years. "Perpetual motion" is here, as also is "co-education," in the Club. Who shall say it will not go on, on, on, till the time shall arrive when our children's children shall be in the full activities and intellectualities of successful life—long after all of us are "over the river"—when our granddaughters shall be "flowers" in the Marietta Reading Club, as their grandmothers once were? Will the sons of our sons be the cultured and refined counterparts of the daughters of our daughters?

MARIETTA AND ITS SOCIETY.

One thing more—Marietta. It is rapidly coming to be the most beautiful city in the great central State of Ohio. Indeed, it may be no risk to say gently, it is the most beautiful now. In a material sense it is grandly improving. In its topographical situation it is delightful. As a place of residence, in all essential requirements of a rational life, its superior cannot be found in the Mississippi Valley. The society of Marietta is not "loud," but quiet. Wealth and "blood," without merit, reckon little. Culture and character, without wealth or "blood," count for a great deal. With a knowledge of other like cities in Southern Ohio, for fifty years, no other has such modest, cultivated and refined ladies, in such magnificent numbers, as has Marietta. Nor are they all in the Senior or in the Junior Club. As now, so in the past, so may it be to come. Towns of three times the number of people, and

three times the pretensions, in Ohio, have no such society and no such a Reading Club, as has charming Marietta on "the Beautiful River."

NOTE.—The foregoing paper was read, Oct. 2, 1894, at the first Club of the season, entertained by Mrs. Prof. Chamberlin. It was resolved, after the reading, "to print the address in pamphlet form for use of the Club," and a committee was appointed to carry this into effect.

THE NEW CONSTITUTION, ADOPTED FEBRUARY 19TH, 1867.

ARTICLE I.

This Society shall be called the Marietta and Harmar Reading Club.

ARTICLE II.

SEC. 1. The Club shall be composed of both ladies and gentlemen.

SEC. 2. The number of members shall not exceed forty.

SEC. 3. In order to become a member one must reside in Marietta or Harmar, and if having never been a member must be proposed as a candidate for membership at least two weeks before being elected.

SEC. 4. No election of a member shall occur except at a regular meeting when two-fifths of the members are present.

SEC. 5. All voting for the election of a member must be by balloting.

SEC. 6. Those and only those whose names are upon three-fifths of the ballots cast shall be members elect.

SEC. 7. No one shall remain a member unless remaining a resident of Marietta or Harmar.

AMENDMENT TO SECTION 7, ARTICLE II, ADOPTED FEBRUARY 27TH, 1883.

Or who shall neglect to attend the meetings and perform the duties of a member for the period of one year, without reasonable excuse.

ARTICLE III.

SEC. 1. The officers may be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Critic, a Vice-Critic and a Budget Reader.

SEC. 2. The officers may be elected at the first meeting of the Club in the Fall, and shall continue in office until their successors are appointed.

SEC. 3. The election of officers must be conducted as that of members is required to be.

SEC. 4. The duties of the officers shall be such as their own judgment and conscience may dictate.

ARTICLE IV.

SEC. 1 All of the members shall be required to read.

SEC. 2. At every meeting there shall be announced the names of two readers for the ensuing meeting.

SEC. 3. The readers may together occupy an hour.

ARTICLE V.

SEC. 1. Each session of the Club may begin on the evening of the first Tuesday in October and close on the evening of the last Tuesday in March, or the first Tuesday in April.

SEC. 2. At each regular meeting a place for the next regular meeting shall be announced.

SEC. 3. Should no lady have proposed to receive the Club on the ensuing club evening the duty of receiving it may be assigned to the first in alphabetical order, of those ladies who have suitable rooms at their disposal and have not received it in the course of the session.

SEC. 4. Should the lady appointed to receive the Club be unable to do so, it shall be her duty to provide, if possible, another place of meeting, and also to insure, if

possible, that all the members in Marietta and Harmar shall be notified of the change.

SEC. 5. The Club may meet at 7 o'clock P. M. unless some other time shall be designated.

AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE V.

Those of the members' wives who are not themselves members shall have the privilege of attending all meetings of the Club without invitation.

ARTICLE VI.

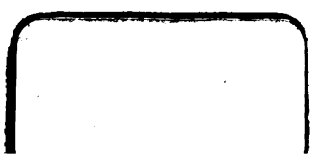
SEC, 1. The exercises in their order may be as follows:
1st Reading of the minutes of the preceding meeting.
2d. Miscellaneous business.
3d. Elections.
4th. Reading of selected pieces.
5th. Report of the Critic.
6th. General discussion.
7th. Reading of the Budget.
8th. Announcement of the readers for the ensuing meeting.
9th. The Party.
10th. Announcement of the time and place for the next meeting.
11th. Adjournment.

SEC. 2. A budget piece shall not be a theme for a general discussion unless the writer permits it to be.

SEC. 3. The other pieces read and the opinions of the critic may be discussed by all present whether members or guests.

ARTICLE VII.

In order that any change may be made with regard to the constitution, it must be proposed at least two weeks before it is voted upon; two-fifths of the members must be present, three-fifths of the members present must vote in favor of it, and the vote must be taken by balloting.



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